The identity of *Verrucaster lichenicola* Tobler

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The genus and species *Verrucaster lichenicola*, described by Tobler in 1913 for waxy pycnidia with hyaline, aseptate conidia on *Cladonia bacillaris*, was poorly known, as the type was missing and no additional similar specimen available. The recent discovery of the type in HBG allowed us to understand that it represents pycnidia of *Cladonia*, not of a lichenicolous fungus. The names thus become younger synonyms of *Cladonia* and *C. macilenta*.


Die Gattung und Art *Verrucaster lichenicola*, die 1913 von Tobler für wachsartige Pyknidien mit hyalinen, unseptierten Konidien auf *Cladonia bacillaris* beschrieben wurde, war schlecht bekannt, da der Typus verschollen war und keine zusätzlichen Belege bekannt waren. Durch die Entdeckung des Typus in HBG wurde uns klar, dass es sich nicht um einen lichenicolonen Pilz, sondern um Pyknidien von *Cladonia* handelt; die Namen werden so zu jüngeren Synonymen von *Cladonia* und von *C. macilenta*.

**Key words:** *Cladonia*, coelomycetes, lichenicolous fungi, pycnidia.

**Introduction**

Tobler (1913) published the genus and species *Verrucaster lichenicola* Tobler for a pycnidial fungus with waxy, superficial conidiomata and hyaline, aseptate, 3.6–7.6 × 0.8–1.6 μm conidia, inducing the formation of galls on the thallus of *Cladonia bacillaris* (Ach.) Genth in Germany. In his revision of lichenicolous coelomycetes, Hawksworth (1981) stated that no type material could be found; he compared the fungus with *Epicladonia* and *Bachmanniomyces* and concluded that the waxy pycnidia and the narrow conidia excluded those two genera. When Diederich & Sérusiaux (2003) described the new *Stromatopogon cladoniae* Diederich & Sérus., a coelomycetous fungus producing macro- and microconidia, they found that the microconidial morph was very similar to the published description of *V. lichenicola*, while the immersed blackish pycnidia of *S. cladoniae* clearly differed from the superficial, waxy pycnidia of *V. lichenicola*.

*Verrucaster lichenicola* has repeatedly been considered as a poorly known taxon that needs to be recollected before a modern redescriptions can be done. In the meantime, it was included in the keys to lichenicolous fungi by Clauzade et al. (1989), in the list of lichenicolous genera by Lawrey & Diederich (2003), in the recent worldwide checklist of lichenicolous fungi by Diederich et al. (2018), and in the most recent Outline of Fungi by Wijayawardene et al. (2020). It was not included, however, in the key to lichenicolous fungi growing on *Cladonia* by Zhurbenko & Pino-Bodas (2017).